

Who Moved My Cheese?

Who among us likes a routine.... a comfortable, well-known routine?

Whether you are at home, at work, or wherever, most of us like the known, and fear the unknown. At work we have honed our ability to do given tasks in a quick and thorough way because we repeat these tasks over and over again. Few of us like change, especially unexpected change.

We all enjoy coming to staff meeting and hearing that we have to do our jobs differently, don't we. We jump at the chance to update our forms, change the way we determine eligibility, or to learn that we have another new Medicaid program. Right? Of course not!!! We groan and moan, including myself. We think to ourselves, WHY? Why do we have to change things? We knew the old way of doing things, we knew it well.

I would like to tell you the story "Who Moved My Cheese" which is about change that takes place in a maze where four characters look for "Cheese - Cheese being a metaphor for what we want to have in life, whether it is a job, a relationship, money, a big house, freedom or even an activity like determining eligibility for Medicaid. Each of us has our own idea of what Cheese is, and we pursue it because we believe it makes us happy. If we get it, we often become attached to it. And if we lose it, or it's taken away, it can be traumatic.

There are four imaginary characters depicted in the story - the mice, "Sniff" and "Scurry", and the little people, "Hem" and "Haw". Sometimes we act like "Sniff" who sniffs out change early, or "Scurry" who scurries into action, or "Hem" who denies and resists change as he fears it will lead to something worse, or "Haw" who learns to adapt in time when he sees changing leads to something better!

Basically, the story follows the mice and the little people going to a specific place in the maze where they have found cheese. They go there everyday and eat cheese. They are content with their cheese and it makes them happy. Pretty soon they become disinterested in scouting for new locations in the maze that may have cheese there. Why should they, their cheese makes them happy. Then the mice notice that each day the cheese supply is dwindling and they prepare to search for new cheese. The little people do not see the dwindling supply of cheese, as they have been too complacent. One day the mice go to the cheese spot and there is no cheese to be found. Immediately, they put on their running shoes and search out the maze for new cheese. The little people are surprised to find no cheese. Who moved my cheese:, they thought. Instead of putting on their running shoes and searching the maze for new cheese, they stay at the same old spot and wait for someone to put the cheese back.

Haw slowly realizes that if he wants to survive he will have to face his fears and search for new cheese. He tries to get Hem to go along with him, but he will not. Eventually Haw does find a new supply of cheese. He realizes that the cheese in the old spot had been dwindling each day, but he failed to notice it back then. He also realizes that if he had begun looking for the cheese earlier, he wouldn't be so weak and hungry. Haw goes back to find Hem and tries to convince

him to come with him to the new cheese spot, but Hem will not change and stays behind.

In our current work climate of dwindling budgets we are going to be required to more with less staff, high caseloads, etc,. In order to do our jobs efficiently and effectively, we are going to have to search for new and better ways of doing things, in other words, new cheese. A simpler verification policy is one way we can do this.